



A VIEW FROM FEW

AN ORGANIZATION FOR OPPORTUNITY AND EQUALITY
FOR WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT

SPACE COAST CHAPTER, KENNEDY SPACE CENTER, FL

DECEMBER, 2003

SPACE COAST CHAPTER, FEW 2003 – 2004 Officers and Committees

President	Barbara Powell
Finance	Clara Anderson
Newsletter	Sharon White
NTP/RTP Planners	Dawn Partlow and Patti Rissman
Nominations	Jean Grenville
Parliamentarian	Carolyn Burnham
President Elect	Dawn Partlow
Seminar	Jean Grenville & Vickie Hall
Compliance	Gail McLean
Diversity	Mayra Smalls
Webmaster	Debbie Ward
Vice President	Patti Rissman
Programs/Publicity	Patti Rissman
Bylaws	Past Presidents
Treasurer	Karin Biega
Membership	Becky Denis
Sunshine	Karen Jansma
Secretary	Jane Eitel
Scholarships	Elizabeth Valentine
Legislation	Marie Argana
Historian	Jean Grenville
Past President	Connie Dobrin
Nat'l VP for Training	Becky Fasulo
Regional Nominations	Jane Eitel
Regional Legislation	Marie Argana



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Barbara Powell

Thanksgiving is behind us and Christmas is fast approaching. I've not even begun to shop. Oh, well somehow it seems to get done, right?

I'd like to thank the entire membership; especially those who have stepped up and taken on the responsibilities of Office or are chairing a committee. I'm always amazed at how much we as a Chapter get accomplished. You've made me proud to be the President of such a great group of women.

I would like to wish all of you and your families the HAPPIEST OF HOLIDAY SEASONS. See you all at the Christmas Party, and don't forget your gift for the Chinese Auction.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Google has implemented a new feature allowing you to type someone's phone number, hit enter, and be given a map to their house. This is obviously a concern for domestic violence victims, and potentially a source of information for a rapist or burglar. Mapquest will actually put a star on your house. In order to test whether your phone number is mapped, go to <http://www.google.com> and type your phone number in the search bar with dashes (i.e. 555-555-1212) and hit enter. Note: If you number is not publicly listed, you should be fine. If you want to block Google from divulging your private information, simply click on the telephone icon next to your phone number. You will see a link where you are allowed to REMOVE yourself. You may wish to pass this along to others.

Do you have girls between 8 and 14? A self esteem program, "Uniquely ME", is available from Girl Scout councils. The program involves age-appropriate activities designed to teach girls how to recognize their strengths, deal with peer pressure

and determine their personal values. Check out web site www.girlscouts.org.

Discount lovers: Classy clearinghouses for upscale products at down-market prices are available at many outlets. Some to consider include www.sierratradingpost.com; www.overstock.com; and www.tuesdaysmorning.com.

Happy Holiday Shopping!



*Submitted By
Gina O'Shaughnessy*

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Daily clicks to the web-site below will help your favorite cause at not cost to you except for the time it takes to click on the icon. Advertisers on the site do the donating for you. Whether your cause is "Hunger", "Breast Cancer", "Child Health", "Rainforest", "Animal Rescue" or all of them, Go Ahead and Click Everyday!

<http://www.thehungersite.com/cgi-bin/WebObjects/CTDSites>



PROGRAM COMMITTEE *Patti Rissman*

Please mark your calendars to join us for our December meeting for our Holiday Party on December 16th at Clara Anderson's house in Rockledge. We will start Social Hour at 5:00 pm and dinner around 6:00 pm. **Please bring an hors d'oeuvres or a dessert. If you drink something special, BYOB.**

We will also have our usual fun gift exchange of a wrapped gift between \$10 and \$15.

Directions will be in the Holiday flyer.



So You Think You Know Everything?

It's impossible to sneeze with your eyes open.

Leonardo Da Vinci invented the scissors.

Maine is the only state whose name is just one syllable.

No word in the English language rhymes with month, orange, silver, or purple.

On a Canadian two dollar bill, the flag flying over the Parliament building is an American flag.

Now you know everything! Maybe!



MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE *Becky Denis*

We are truly glad to have our members support our Chapter and if anyone has any questions, call Becky Denis at: 321-867-4104 (voice), 321-867-1458 (fax) or E-mail at Rebecca.M.Denis@nasa.gov

If you haven't yet sent in your membership dues, please send your check to our Treasurer, Karin Biega.

Also, please remember, when you use the Global FEW Membership list, it only includes the folks that are on-site. Individuals need to create a **FEW Membership Distribution list** in their personal address books and add in those folks that are off-site.

COMPLIANCE *Gail McLean*

How does the FEW Compliance Committee Interface with Legislative Committee efforts?

The short answer is the legislative function is responsible for monitoring and communicating pending legislation to FEW Members, and for insuring FEW members are politically active through grass roots lobbying efforts and voter education and registration. The compliance function works with (EEO and other employee rights) laws already on the books to insure these are being complied with by federal agencies.

At the national level, the Compliance function belongs to the VP, Congressional and Governmental Relations. The Legislative, and Compliance

Committee's overlap somewhat, but do not totally close the policing gap. At a national level, the legislative committee has compliance and a legislative cell with two distinct functions.

Per the By-Laws, Compliance Committee's were initially designed to be like the legislative police, verifying compliance to existing legislation where applicable to FEW members. Many of the FEW Chapters have continued to keep these committee functions separate. Both the Compliance and Legislative Committee functions provide a service to the legislative effort, **but** can be combined into one committee depending on what is best for the Chapter.



SUNSHINE
Karen Jansma

Celebrating birthdays in December:

Muzette Fiander	12/15
Jane Drinkhouse-Demars	12/25
Patti Rissman	12/26

Happy Birthday!

Our Chapter would like to continue to remember our FEW Sisters Birthdays as well as any other significant events in our members' lives, so please send information to Karen Jansma at Karen.S.Jansma@nasa.gov. Also, if your big day comes around and it is not noted in the monthly Newsletter, please let Karen know.

Also, a sympathy card was sent to Jeannette Miller, Past National FEW President.

GOVERNMENT NEWS & LEGISLATION

Marie Argana



NASA'S Number One

"Best Places to Work" is a ranking of federal government organizations that draws from the opinions of more than 100,000 federal employees who responded to the Office of Personnel Management's Federal Human Capital Survey.

Twenty-eight cabinet departments and independent agencies and nearly 200 sub-agencies are rated on overall employee satisfaction. The organizations are also rated in 10 work environment categories,

including effective leadership, performance-based rewards/advancement, family-friendly culture and benefits.

According to federal employees, the top federal agencies to work for are:

1. NASA
2. National Science Foundation
3. Office of Management and Budget
4. General Services Administration
5. EPA

Government Reform

The House passed the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2004 (HR 1588) on a vote of 362-40. The bill authorizes \$400 billion for the Department of Defense and the national security programs of the Department of Energy. The Senate followed suit and passed the bill by a vote of 87 to 1. Included in the bill were the broad new authorities for Defense Secretary Rumsfeld to redesign the civil service system governing the Department's 700,000 civilian employees. President Bush signed the legislation on November 24, 2003.

The bill will give Rumsfeld the authority to throw out the half-century old General Schedule classification system and replace it with a new pay-for-performance system. Poor performers would get little or no raise, or perhaps even a pay cut.

Further, it establishes the new National Security Personnel System for the Department of Defense. Under this measure, the Secretary of Defense must work with the director of the Office of Personnel Management to create a new personnel system. National-level union advocates must also be consulted during the creation of the system; however the Defense Secretary and OPM director have final authority to make or reject any changes. DoD will set up an internal system for adjudicating employee appeals of disciplinary decision rather than having employees appeal disciplinary action to the Merit Systems Protection Board.

The bill also provides for a 4.15% average increase in base pay for members of the military, and authorizes extensions on other special pay and bonuses for active duty personnel through December 31, 2004. Further, the bill allows enrollment in TRICARE, the military health care system, on a cost-share basis for non-mobilized reservists and their families for those service members who are unemployed or whose employers do not offer health insurance.

Finally, the bill gives DoD the authority to offer early retirement incentives to up to 25,000 employees each

year and to rehire DoD retirees with no reduction in the retirees' annuities.

Patricia Wolfe, FEW President, has expressed apprehension about White House approval of the 2004 National Defense Authorization Act. "As an organization that represents women and men employed in the federal government, we remain concerned about the fact that more than half of the federal workforce will no longer be protected under the civil service system," stated Wolfe. "Further, these changes are extremely far-reaching and yet unproven in their success rate."

"We ask the Defense Department to work with employee organizations, such as FEW, as they move forward with developing this new personnel and pay system," Wolfe said. "We stand ready to assist in developing a fair program that adequately provides protections for the women and men serving their country as dedicated government employees."

Leave for Mobilized Employees Improved

A provision of the Defense Department budget measure entitles federal employees to receive 22 workdays of military leave when performing full-time military service as a result of a call or order to active duty in support of a contingency operation, effectively making their leave entitlement the same whether they are sent overseas or not. Meanwhile, President Bush has issued a memo to agencies ordering agencies to give employees returning from active duty five days of uncharged leave.

Employment Benefits

Legislation (HR-2989) carrying a 4.1 percent January 2004 federal raise has hit a snag in Congress because of Bush administration objections to language restricting its contracting-out program. Congressional leaders had been hoping to pass the bill, the Transportation-Treasury appropriations measure, as separate legislation, but have been unable to bring the bill to final floor voting because of White House dissatisfaction with several provisions added in a House-Senate conference aimed at adding greater protections to employees--including a clause to allow employees to challenge agency decisions at various stages, a guarantee that in-house functions would be allowed to reorganize before being put up for bid, and a requirement that to win, the contractor bid must be at least 10 percent or \$10 million less. One approach being considered was to apply those provisions, or at least some of them, only to agencies covered by the Transportation-Treasury bill. In addition to those two departments, the bill covers some independent agencies, but such a move would have the restrictions apply to only a small percentage of federal jobs subject to contracting-out reviews. The bill might become part of a catchall funding bill for the rest of the current fiscal year.

Mileage Reimbursement May Increase

Federal travelers may see an increase in their mileage reimbursement rate in 2004 if the General Services Administration follows suit with the Internal Revenue Service, which recently announced rates would increase to 37.5 cents per mile next year. Currently, federal employees who travel in their own cars on government business are reimbursed 36 cents per mile, a rate set earlier this year by GSA.

FSA Open Season Soon to Begin:

Open season in enrolling in the federal flexible spending accounts (FSAs) program for 2004 starts Nov. 10. A flexible spending account is a tax-favored program that allows employees to set aside pre-tax money from their paychecks to pay for a variety of eligible expenses. There are two types of FSAs.

The health care FSA covers eligible health care expenses not reimbursed by any medical, dental or vision care plan an employee or his eligible dependents may have. The dependent care FSA covers eligible dependent care expenses incurred so that an employee can work; the employee and spouse can work; or an employee's spouse can look for work or attend school full-time.

The annual limit for flexible spending account health care accounts will rise by \$1,000 to \$4,000 in calendar year 2004. The increase comes after an IRS ruling holding that FSA account holders can claim reimbursement for over-the-counter drugs. In announcing the increase, the Office of Personnel Management also extended the current open season for taking out FSA accounts for 2004 by a week, until December 15. In guidance to agencies, OPM said that employees who already made elections for 2004 and who wish to change them in light of the higher limit may do so. The change does not affect dependent care accounts, whose maximum remains \$5,000.

For more information, go to www.fsafeds.com.

Medicare Measure Doesn't Carry Guarantee

The bill (HR-1) to create a prescription drug benefit in Medicare does not guarantee that the Federal Employees Health Benefits program will maintain current prescription drug coverage for federal retirees. The prospects of adding prescription drug coverage to Medicare has raised concerns that employer-sponsored health insurance plans, including the FEHB, might limit or exclude coverage for retirees on the theory that Medicare would be providing a full suite of benefits--even though the Medicare drug benefit would not take full effect until 2006 and even then would not be as comprehensive as the FEHB drug benefit is today. To address that concern, the House in July passed a bill (H-2631)--a

counterpart (S-1369) is pending in the Senate--to assure that federal retirees would continue to get coverage on the same terms as active employees. The final version of the Medicare bill does not include that provision, however, although it does include the government in a subsidy arrangement designed to encourage employers to keep retirees covered under their health insurance plans.

Use or Lose Date Coming Up

While the current federal leave year doesn't end until January 10, the date for scheduling "use or lose" annual leave in most cases is November 29. Generally, federal employees may carry over to the next leave year no more than 240 hours of accrued annual leave; they must use their excess annual leave by the end of a leave year or they will forfeit it. An agency may consider restoring annual leave that was forfeited due to an exigency of the public business or sickness of the employee but only if the annual leave was scheduled in writing before the start of the third biweekly pay period prior to the end of the leave year. Employees who find themselves unable to use their excess leave may wish to consider donating it to a leave sharing program for the benefit of fellow employees who have medical or other emergencies. (Some employees have expressed interest in donating annual leave to colleagues who have been mobilized for military duty; however, the government's leave-sharing policy does not allow that.)

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Facts about Women and Heart Disease From Women's Heart Advantage at the Parrish Medical Center

- **87 percent of women living in North Brevard qualify as being at risk for cardiovascular disease, yet only 27 percent have actually been diagnosed or perceive themselves as being at risk.**
- 38 percent of women compared to 25 percent of men will die within one year after having a heart attack.
- The death rate due to cardiovascular disease for African-American women is 26 percent higher than for Caucasian women.
- Women with diabetes are four times more likely than men to develop heart disease.

- Smoking is the most prevalent and preventable risk factor for cardiovascular disease in women younger than 45.

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EEOC Issues Fact Sheet on Diabetes and the Workplace

During the past five years, the EEOC has seen a 13% increase in the number of charges filed under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) alleging discrimination based on diabetes. To assist employers in understanding their obligations under the Act, the EEOC has issued a fact sheet on how the ADA applies to diabetes in the workplace.

The fact sheet covers topics such as: when diabetes is considered to be a disability under the ADA; when an employer is permitted to ask an applicant or employee questions about his or her diabetes; types of reasonable accommodations employees with diabetes may need on the job; and how an employer should handle safety concerns about people with diabetes in the workplace.

According to Commission Chair Cari M. Dominguez, "This new fact sheet focusing on people with diabetes is intended to be the first in a series to address specific types of disabilities."

The American Diabetes Association reports that about 17 million people in the United States suffer from diabetes, and the incidence of the disease is on the rise.

The fact sheet is available on the EEOC's web site at <http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/diabetes.html>.

25th Annual Training Program (ATP) Jean Grenville

A seminar meeting was held on November 13, 2003. Each committee chair present submitted a report. An entrée was selected for lunch for both days of the seminar. Speakers for the workshops have been finalized and contracts are ready to be mailed. The keynote speaker has been selected by the FWPWG and contracts are in work. Exhibit letters have been prepared and will be mailed to past and potential exhibitors. The registration committee is working on the registration package and the software for registration. The results of the meeting with the hotel were reported including the improvements that have been made to the hotel since last year. Overall, everything is going well. The next meeting of the seminar committee is **Thursday, January 13, 2003 at 3:00 p.m. in Room 1460.** All seminar committee chairs/co-chairs are asked to attend to report on the status of their committee.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December

- 11 Center Director's Holiday Coffee
- 16 Holiday Party, Rockledge CC
- 19-27 Chanukah
- 25 Christmas
- 26 Beginning of Kwanzaa

SPACE COAST CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

Sharon White

This monthly publication is a means of sharing information and ideas. Please send news articles or items of interest for this Newsletter to Sharon White at OP-ES-A or e-mail at Sharon.L.White@nasa.gov Please feel free to share this Newsletter with your friends. And for anyone interested, a Membership Application is attached as the last page.

FEDERALLY EMPLOYED WOMEN
Space Coast Chapter 009
Membership Application

New Applicant		Renewal		Previous Member		Change of Membership Info	
Name				Membership Number			Birth Date
Home Address							
City, State, Zip							
Home Phone							
Agency/Company							
Mail Code/Address							
City, State, Zip							
Work Phone				FAX #			
E-mail Address							
METHOD OF PAYMENT (Credit Cards only available Jan-Mar)							
Total Amount Due: see schedule below							
Cash or Check		Check No.		Credit Card	Visa		Master Card
Card Number					Expiration Date (MM/YY)		
Print Cardholders Name (as it appears on card)				Signature (Credit Cards Only)			

	Month	Amount Due		Month	Amount Due		Month	Amount Due
	March	\$30.00		April	\$28.00		May	\$26.00
	June	\$24.00		July	\$22.00		August	\$20.00
	September	\$17.00		October	\$15.00		November	\$13.00
	December	\$11.00		January	\$9.00		February	\$7.00

Please place an X by the month dues are paid and pay the indicated amount.

National Office requests the following for statistics only:

Position/Title: _____ **Series/Grade:** _____

Circle One: SES GM GS WG Military Other

Circle if Applicable: FWP Full-time FWP Part-time EEO

Demographics

Sex [F/M]: _____ **Race:** _____ **Years of Service:** _____ **Retired [Y/N]:** _____

Membership dues are to be paid February 1st of each year.
 Please contact the Membership Chair, Becky Denis, 867-4104 if you have any questions.